

Worship on April 14, 2024 (CCLI: License Number #3156883)
(Welcoming Elder: Dr. Robert Revington)

Sunday Order of worship

We Gather

- Call to worship
- Praise song – BOP 251 Christ is alive
- Prayer for worship and Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song – BOP 249 The day of resurrection
- Time for our children

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- First reading: Acts 3:12-19
- Second reading: Psalm 4 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 24:36b-48
- Sermon: You are witnesses of these things
- Hymn BOP 353 Hail, our once-rejected Jesus
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey – BOP 592 I, the Lord of sea and sky

We Serve

- Benediction

Responsive Call to Worship

We gather with joy, for Easter brings us new life.

The Risen Christ is with us wherever we go.

Love breaks all bonds and unites us in hope.

Christ has defeated death. Let us rejoice and be glad!

Come and worship with hearts full of praise.

O God, receive our grateful Hallelujah!

Praise song – BOP 251 Christ is alive

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God our Maker, we praise you for all the wonders in your creation: For the detailed perfection revealed in a baby's tiny fingers, in spring flowers and plants coming to life in this spring time. Changes of the season reveals your master plan for your creation. Through the wonders of around our lives, we praise and lift our hearts to worship you.

So let the life, teaching and resurrection of the Risen Christ lift and instruct our hearts this day, that we may greet a new week as an occasion to discover him in our midst, making all things new in the spring time of your Holy Spirit.

God our Redeemer, in raising Jesus Christ from the dead, you showed us your power to defeat all that brings fear and sorrow to our lives. Yet, we confess that we are sometimes uncertain if we can trust the promise of resurrection for ourselves. Forgive us when we struggle to trust your goodness for us. Forgive us when we miss the signs of your love in our midst.

This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Scripture teaches us that there is a time for every matter under heaven. A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance. In confessing our sins to God, we have offered God our tears of regret.

Now is the time to rejoice in God's mercy: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. In Jesus Christ, we have time to make a new start. Thanks be to God.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you.

Praise song – BOP 249 The day of resurrection

Prayer for children

Prayer for Illumination:

God of Word and Wisdom, the Risen Christ opened the minds of his friends to understand the Scriptures. Send us your Holy Spirit to open our minds to receive your truth and love which can fill our hearts and change our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

- First reading: Acts 3:12-19
- Second reading: Psalm 4 (refrain 1)
- Third reading: Luke 24:36b-48

“This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.”

SERMON: You are witnesses of these things

Today's sermon title is **“You are witnesses of these things”**

Witness. What does witness do? They tell what they experienced. They tell what they saw and heard. To whom? Most of the time, they tell what they know to those who don't know it yet.

What kind of things do we witness? Car accident. We need someone to provide information of what happened. Or, if Tim Hortons give out free donuts and someone gets the free donut and shares the good news. Or someone saw sea monster when he was fishing on Lake Ontario. From small to big, from easy to believe to hard to believe, witnesses provide news.

This could be a typical conversation.

Person A: You know what, this morning, I met Julia Roberts (Joe Biden or famous people) at Starbucks on Young.

Person B: What are you talking about! Maybe she looks like her, but it can't be her.

Something hard to believe had happened to Person A. And he shared it. But, person B couldn't believe it. The witness, person A, could be discouraged, if it really happened.

If person A experienced this kind of rejection and disbelief repeatedly, would he want to share the news continually? He would need a proof, like taking a picture or getting the autograph.

When Jesus was risen, it was something unbelievable. It was too great to be true. When people encountered the news, they tried to believe, but they could not.

They heard the news that the tomb was empty. They went and saw the empty tomb. Moreover, after witnessing the empty tomb, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus. As they walked, they talked about the risen Jesus. One person came along and asked what they were talking about. They explained the risen Christ as they walked together. Near the village, in the evening, the disciples invited the person to stay together. As they shared the meal, the stranger took bread, blessed and broke it, and then gave it to them. **Luke 24:31, "Then [the eyes of the disciples] were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road?"** Jesus came to the disciples. They met risen Christ. They returned to Jerusalem immediately. **V33, "That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, ... they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.**

Today's passage is the situation when they gathered around and talked about what had happened to these two who just came back from Emmaus.

V36, While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Okay. They saw Jesus. But, they thought it was Jesus' ghost. **V37, "They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost."**

Jesus said to them again. Why do you doubt? Look at me, my hands and feet. It is me. Touch me and see. I have flesh and bones. There was joy, for sure, but at the same time, there was disbelieving and wondering. Jesus asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" **V42, "They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence."**

So far, the emotion of the disciples were **1) frightened and alarmed as they stayed behind the locked door. 2) This turned into joy when Jesus came. But, not a pure joy, but joy mixed with disbelief and puzzlement.** So, Jesus showed them eating to comfort them, giving them some proof that he's real. In addition, Jesus reminded them that Jesus was fulfilling the scriptures. **V45, "Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day.'**

This was a rumour spreading around without the actual evidence. But, now, Jesus came as the evidence himself.

And Jesus continues to tell them what is to be done.

V47, “and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

Do you see the movement of Jesus’ message to the disciples?

First, Jesus comforted them. Peace be with you. Do not be afraid because I am here with you. I came back from death. I fulfilled the prophecies from the scriptures.

Second, Jesus commissioned the disciples. “Repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in the name of Jesus Christ to all nations beginning from you.”

So, let us imagine that we are one the disciples. What do we have to do next?

We are to proclaim the first message of Jesus. **Mark 1:15, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”**

Can you say to a random person that he or she is a sinner? How challenging it is?! It is difficult to say that you are a sinner to somebody, even though that’s what the Bible says. That is the special mission we have from Jesus.

Let’s look back the change of the emotions of the disciples.

They were lost, panicked until they met Risen Jesus.

After meeting Jesus, there was joy, but mixed emotions with disbelief and wondering.

But, Jesus comforted them. They have peace now.

After Jesus giving them mission of proclaiming repentance and forgiveness, they were glad and thankful, but lost again. They were lost. They didn’t know where to start and what to do.

V49, Jesus continued to speaking to them, **“And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”**

“I know how you feel now. I know that you don’t know what to do and where to start. So, wait here. I will send the Holy Spirit, so that the Holy Spirit will guide your steps and he will empower you.”

To make us his witnesses, Jesus first comforted us. Peace be with you. We have Risen Christ as the evidence of our faith. After giving us the Great Commission to spread out the good news to the whole world, Jesus gave us promise of the Holy Spirit. We will be clothed with power from above. So, for the second time, peace be with you, as you venture into the unknown.

The disciples were hiding behind the locked door seeking for their security. Staying in the comfort zone without telling others to be sinners and the need for repentance might give us comfort and security. But, what about the peace from Jesus?

Through removing our worries and wonders, Jesus gives us peace, not the security we seek. When giving Great Commission, Jesus gives us the power at the same time. Jesus is pushing us out of our boundaries. Jesus was opening the locked doors and invites us to peace, not our own security.

Let us rely upon the promises of God. And let us follow the examples of God's people who didn't stay in their own security, but in the peace of Jesus Christ. There have been cloud of witnesses throughout the history.

Hebrews 12:1-2, **“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings to closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.”**

Jesus comes to us and says, “Peace be with you.” Let us hold his hands and walk with him as we live our lives as witnesses of the good news of the gospel. Peace be with you as you witness the Risen Christ.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Hymn BOP 353 Hail, our once-rejected Jesus

Prayer for the people

God of overflowing love, you called us your witnesses. You showed us your love, your power, your glory, your grace, your forgiveness, your wisdom, your abundance, and your faithfulness. We witnessed you. Thank you for revealing yourself to us. With that experience, we cannot stay quiet. We cannot just keep it ourselves. We want to share this and spread out to our surroundings. As you promised your peace in our hearts and the power from above, help us have them in our daily lives and help us live in them daily. We want to shine our lights, so your light gives this world your life.

We pray for your church. On your day, numerous people gathered in the church buildings and call out your name. Empower them as your witnesses. Even though we are your witnesses as church, we do not display your life and power. Help us have peace and power and confidence on what we believe and what we can do. Make us witness of what we have experienced. Make us warriors of sharing good news and warriors of prayers, warriors of love.

There are people who are suffering from physical sicknesses. Have mercy upon them. You are with them and you are holding them. Let them experience your presence. Comfort their hearts and give peace. There are struggles in relationships. We want something from others. Sometimes, it's really rightful. Help us remember you. You didn't have to give your life for us. Even though it's challenging and frustrating, help us try to follow your steps of sacrifice. As we cry out to you, as our hearts filled with pain and struggle, embrace us and fill our hearts with your peace. We have prayer needs and we have desires. Help us lay them down to your feet. Give us faith and answer our prayers.

Sometimes, keeping our faith is hard. Your love seems unrealistic. But, remind of us the undeniable love and grace we have experienced through our faith journey. You are our God and we have been loved. Help us come to your presence to worship and praise you for what we have witnessed. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: Our lives overflow with blessing and goodness in Christ and in creation. Out of the bounty with which God has blessed us, let us remember how God

is good in our lives and let us present to God our offering with gratitude that overflows.
Let us praise God and glorify him with the Doxology (BOP #830.)

Offering prayer:

God our Maker, you have filled the world with so much abundance. We offer our gifts to you, knowing they are part of your abundance. Bless them and use them to bring hope and new life in Christ's name to a world that so badly needs these gifts and our witnesses. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen

Song for the Journey – BOP 592 I, the Lord of sea and sky

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be. Jesus calls us to be his witnesses. Becoming witness is challenging. As Jesus gives us the mission, he gives us power as well through the Holy Spirit. It's the power from above. We might be a little scared or overwhelmed, so Jesus invites us to his peace, not our own security. Let us hold his hands and walk with me.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.